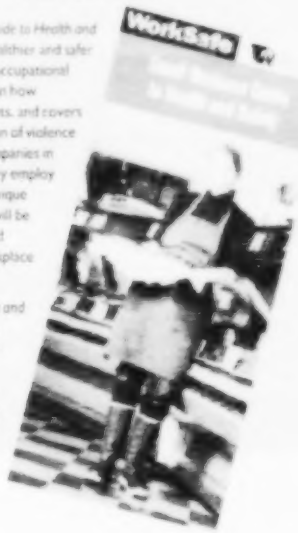
Access

News on WCB products, programs, and services

Help for small business

The WCB has revised the *Small Business Guide to Health and Safety* to help small businesses achieve a healthier and safer workplace. The publication outlines basic occupational health and safety requirements, gives tips on how employers can prevent injuries and accidents, and covers registration, young workers, and prevention of violence among other things. Ninety percent of companies in B.C. are classed as small businesses and they employ 40 percent of all workers. To meet their unique needs, the Small Business Service Centre will be consulting with business to design tools and materials that will focus on improving workplace safety and preventing injuries.

Copies of the *Small Business Guide to Health and Safety* can be obtained free of charge from WCB Publications and Videos. To place an order, fax **604 279-7406**, e-mail **pubvid@wcb.bc.ca**, or phone **604 276-3068** (toll-free in B.C. at **1 800 661-2112**, local **3068**).



NAOSHWeek winners 2000

Interfor safety coordinator Colin Osborne (left) and manager Ron Sander display award-winning NAOSHWeek materials.

Interfor's Squamish Lumber Division walked away with first place in the national and provincial Best Overall categories for NAOSH (North American Occupational Safety and Health) Week activities held in May 2000.

Interfor was one of 13 companies recognized for their outstanding promotion of workplace health and safety in B.C.

A first-time NAOSHWeek participant, Interfor organized a well-publicized safety festival in the mill and throughout the community. Activities included a poster contest for elementary school students, family day, chainsaw training courses, safety tours, fire safety demonstrations, and first aid training. At the mill, a physiotherapist was brought in to observe employees at their workstations, assess body movements of workers, and recommend to employees stretches, countermoves, and proper body mechanics.

For a full listing of the NAOSHWeek 2000 winners, read the November/December 2000 issue of *WorkSafe Magazine*, available online at **www.worksafebc.com/pubs/newsletters/ws_mag/**.

Details of NAOSHWeek 2001, to take place May 6 to 12, will be published in upcoming issues of *WorkSafe Magazine*. Next year's theme will be "Prevention is the Cure."

Brochure explains experience rating

A new WCB brochure contains information to help employers better understand ER2000, the WCB's new experience rating plan. A copy of the brochure, called "The safer you are, the less you pay," is included in your annual rate notification package.

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More accurate payroll for quarterly accounts

Employers who have one classification and remit to the WCB four times a year will see changes to their Employer Remittance Forms in 2001. If you are one of these employers, you will be required to enter the total of worker, shareholder, and subcontractor earnings **for the quarter only** on the payment slip of your form. This change ensures that your payroll is accurately captured, and that you are not over- or under-charged on your insurance premiums.

In your calculation of earnings, please include gross payroll, commissions, holiday pay, sick leave pay, leave of absence pay, management fees, bonuses, other remuneration before deductions, and any other means by which you pay a worker, shareholder, or subcontractor for services (e.g., piecework).

Also new for 2001, an external vendor, who is bonded and accredited with the utmost level of security, will compile these earnings for WCB purposes.

For more information, contact the WCB Employer Service Centre at 604 244-6181, or toll-free in B.C. at 1 888 922-2768.

No minimum on reported shareholders' earnings

In response to employers' concerns, the WCB has changed the way that shareholders' earnings (or principals' earnings) are reported. Prior to 2000, employers were required to report a minimum of $12,000 in shareholders' earnings annually — even when their shareholders did not draw any earnings from the company. Effective January 1, 2000, there was no longer a set minimum. Active directors, shareholders, and other corporate officers will simply report the same gross earnings they report to the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

Employers report their shareholders' earnings to the WCB on two different forms: the Employer Payroll and Contract Labour Report (which all employers submit once a year) and the Employer Remittance Form (which employers with quarterly accounts remit four times a year). In the past, shareholders' earnings were reported separately, in a box of their own. Now, shareholders' earnings will be included as part of the overall calculation of wages and salaries. For the quarterly Employer Remittance Form, this change will be effective January 2001.

For more information, contact the WCB Employer Service Centre at 604 244-6181, or toll-free in B.C. at 1 888 922-2768.

Statement of account easier to read

At a glance, you can now see your balance from the previous month, as well as any new charges, credits, or payments applied to your account. The balance due on your account is clearly featured. The statement of account is mailed to only those employers who have an outstanding balance on their account — in the form of a credit or a debit. For more information about the statement, visit WorkSafe Online at **www.worksafebc.com**.

Base rates drop in 2001

In 2001, the Workers' Compensation Board is reducing base rates for most B.C. employers, the fifth decline in as many years. The average base rate for 2001 will be $1.79 per $100 of assessable worker payroll, down more than six percent from the previously announced average of $1.91 for 2000.

"As industry knows, premium rates for the most part reflect past performance, which has generally been improving in terms of injury rates and investment income," says Sid Fattedad, WCB Chief Financial Officer. "Investment income has been better than anticipated for quite some time and employers are seeing those results in lower rates."

In spite of the reduction in base rates, Fattedad has some words of caution for B.C. employers: "Not all employers will see a reduction in their rates in 2001. In fact, approximately 39 percent of the 165,000 employers registered with the WCB will see a rise in their rates. This is primarily due to the continued transitioning of employers from our old insurance system to our new one."

B.C. employers can expect to see their 2001 rates, which include both their base rates and their experience rating discounts, in their annual rate notification packages scheduled for mailing in late November to early December.

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This newsletter is also available electronically on the WCB web site, WorkSafe Online, at: **www.worksafebc.com/pubs/newsletters/access/**. Look for the next issue in March 2001.

WorkSafe

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

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